

MARIN

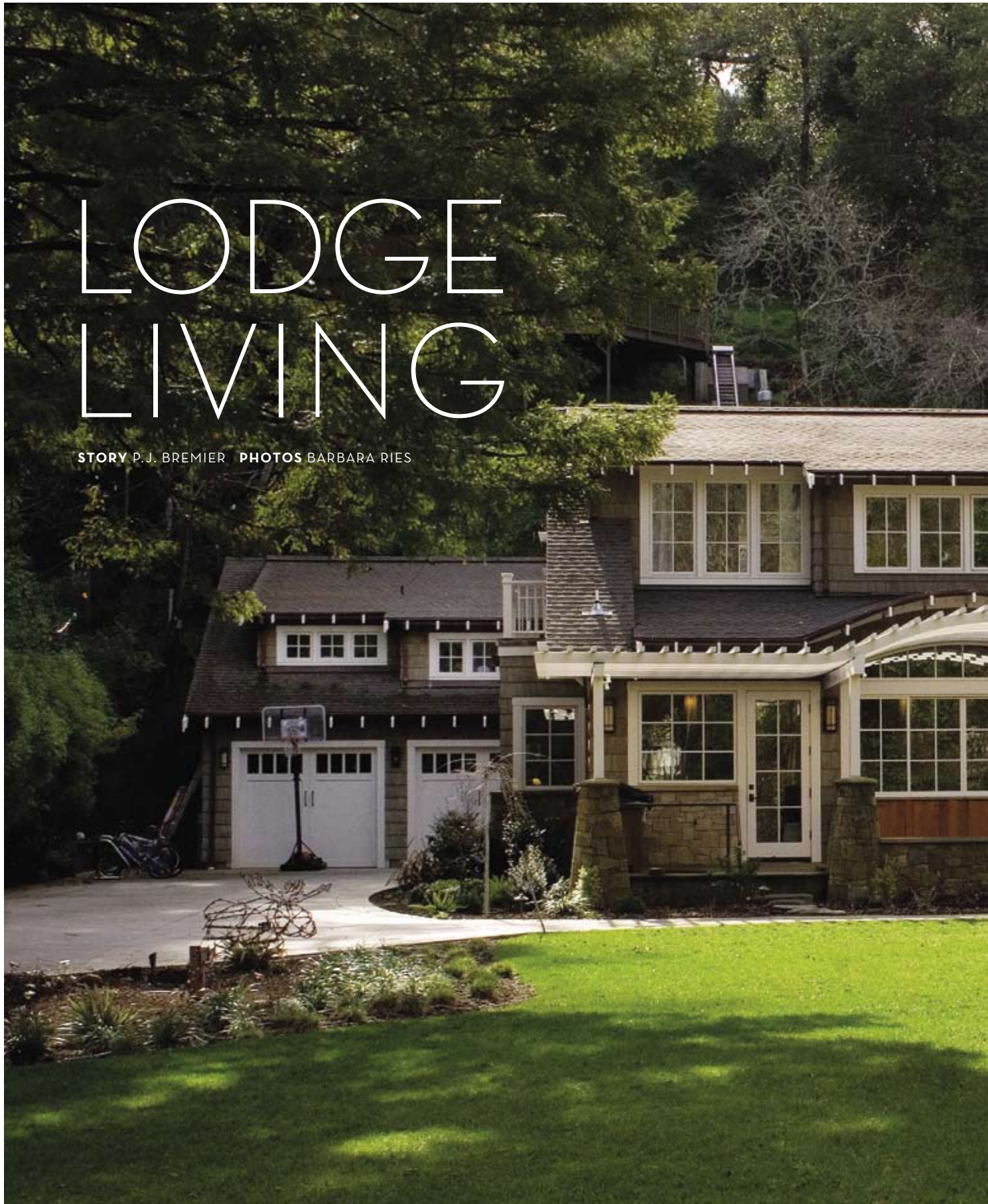
EXTRAORDINARY LIVING



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LODGE LIVING

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“When your home is a lodge,
all who live or visit there are guests.”

—DAVID LUDWIG



A LODGE MAY SEEM MORE appropriate on the forested slopes of the Sierra than on the leafy streets of Ross, but for Peter and Toni Thompson, this traditional form of housing perfectly fit their modern needs.

In 2003, the Thompsons had purchased a shingled East Coast-style house, but it was the very special setting they really loved. “It was so private that it felt like it was in its own little world,” Toni Thompson says. “We knew we wanted a connection to the outdoors and to be able to entertain both inside and outside, on the front porch and at the pool, for most of the year.”

It was also important that the house be rustic, cozy, and low-maintenance with one main multitasking living space for the entire family, she adds. “With three kids, a dog and a cat, I wanted an informal space that didn’t require a lot of roping off of rooms from them, materials that could stand up to all of them, and a design with clean, simple lines but with an edge to it.”

A lodge home was the answer, says San Anselmo architect David Ludwig. He believes this family-friendly housing style is more in tune

with the Marin way of life than the more prolific mini-estates being commonly built in this area.

Lodge homes have their roots in the family-style hotels that were once popular vacation destinations. “Historically,” says Ludwig, “the grand lodges offered their guests a unique opportunity for both elegant gathering and isolated repose. Today’s lodge home can capture much of the historic flavor by focusing on flexibility and privacy.”

That flexibility derives from creating fewer specific-use rooms such as isolated kitchens or formal living and dining rooms and instead using space to accommodate the evolving needs of the occupants.

A lodge also reshapes conventional ideas about privacy. In the current residential paradigm, the master suite reigns supreme in the bedroom

Above: lodge living design incorporates great room concept with open floor plan including kitchen, dining and living room. Opposite page, clockwise from upper left: Toni Thompson’s office is alcove adjacent to kitchen; bar is in back corner of great room; windows in stairwell to second floor provide natural light; convenient and colorful open shelving in kitchen.





wing. Children and occupants of the other rooms “must file past the parents” in order to come and go from their own rooms, Ludwig says. “It’s an old floor plan that no longer suits the dynamics of Marin families.”

Ludwig prefers the concept of the homeowner as lodge keeper—as a host to growing children or to visiting friends and families. In this sense, the lodge keepers take one area of the house for personal quarters and leave the rest, whether in the form of great gathering spaces or retreatlike private rooms, open to the guests.

GRACIOUS LODGE GOES NEW PRIMITIVE

Originally the Thompsons intended to remodel the house they bought, but its low ceilings, patchwork floor plan and property line issues weren’t compatible with their plans, so they needed to build a new one. They collaborated on the 4,500-square-foot house with Ludwig, Larkspur interior designer Candace Killman and Caletti Construction.

The stone-and-shingle exterior, accented with a prominent eyebrow eave in front, is a nod to the past, but the interior has a contemporary flair with a new-primitive style. Its rustic elegance relies on unsophisticated materials, imperfect finishes, minimal trims, and exposed beams.

“The style is really about honoring the materials in an authentic way and paring down, but not eliminating, the details,” Ludwig says. A lodge can be just as compatible with a number of other styles, such as arts and crafts, mission, warm modern, converted-barn or the traditional log look. Even different styles within the house can fuse seamlessly.

The Thompsons’ service area, for example, consisting of a pantry, laundry and mudroom, is adjacent to the kitchen, but done in a turn-of-the-century look. Killman blurred the lines between the two spaces by using the same color palette, choosing an edgier farmhouse sink in the service room and a sophisticated wire in the kitchen cabinet fronts.

The unfitted kitchen has various workstations and easy traffic flow. The rift-cut oak cabinetry is alternately topped with stainless steel and gray glass quartzite, both hardworking materials, and beechwood planking tops the island. And as lodges are predicated on hospitality, there are two warming drawers adjacent to the cooktop and a second refrigerator and dishwasher in the pantry to accommodate large groups.

A subtle relationship exists between the interior and exterior dining rooms, marked by the outside eyebrow eave, which gradually levels out into the dining area ceiling. Twin breakfronts separate both dining areas, and generous windows between them double as pass-throughs.

Entertaining guests in the living space is made easy via a wet bar outfitted with a microwave, flat-screen television, wine cooler, dishwasher drawer and storage space camouflaged behind bubble-glass-fronted cabinetry. Cinnabar-colored swivel stools by A. Rudin at the curved bar are companions to the chairs around the black jarrah dining table.

Pool and flagstone patio is focal point of expansive front yard with guest house situated behind it. Opposite: David Ludwig

Killman kept to a soft color scheme—Dijon for the fireplace, soft olive for the sofa and wheat for the walls—and chose a durable Tibetan rug from Dolma Carpets and kid- and pet-friendly upholstery of chenille and leather for the custom-designed living room furnishings.

The reclaimed-tobacco-barn oak used both for flooring and to clad the room's steel support beams is a unifying element of the great room, which is anchored at either end by the hearths of both cooktop and fireplace. Natural light bounces off the white trellising outside and, along with the numerous windows and interior skylights, illuminates what could be an otherwise dim house, given the hill directly behind it to the south.

KEEPING IT PRIVATE

Within this rustic wrapping is a stylishly modern master suite. It has separate dressing rooms, a sitting room and a large bathroom that contains a curbless steam shower, floor-to-ceiling medicine and linen cabinets and low vessel sinks designed by Killman.

Halila limestone was chosen for the countertop, sinks and shower and a Kota brown slate for the floor. A backsplash made of recycled beer bottles shimmers behind the sinks and tub. "It's mostly from Corona beer," Killman says, "but I was pulling samples all the time because evidently people drink different beers in different seasons, so the color combinations changed."

A stair tower behind the great room provides a wall of windows on one side, a "kid zone" underneath (complete with nearby cubbyholes) and access to the upper floor.

Here the four bedrooms and two baths are the domain of the family's three young children, although it will also serve them well when they're teenagers. In the future, the rooms can be used by visiting friends and family. "The house wasn't designed only with the next five years of the children's lives in mind," Ludwig says. "It has a flexibility that a normal home doesn't have and allows for the family dynamics to change."

The children participated in choosing the color of their rooms—a smaller room with an overhead loft for the younger boy, a larger, more masculine-style one for his older brother and a feminine room with a balcony for their sister. Her bathroom has a footed vanity with pink Depression-glass knobs and a Crema Marfil marble top; the Ann Sacks hand-clipped mosaic backsplash is made of the same marble with pink and taupe accents.

The fourth bedroom is used as a playroom with study stations, a television, game table and comfortable seating.

The beauty of a lodge home like this one is that it lends itself so well to the outdoors. Here there's a large swath of lawn to play on, a swimming pool with cabana, and two hillside cabins, accessed by a hillelevator, for even more guest space.

"To us, lodge living meant taking in the natural surroundings and living informally in a house that didn't have a lot of rules or rooms with distinct purposes," Toni Thompson says. "After all, when you go to a lodge, you're on vacation, there to relax. You want spaces where people can make their own rules and feel comfortable."



DAVID LUDWIG'S LODGE PHILOSOPHY

THE LODGE

THE ESTATE

informal	formal
a statement about the guest	a statement about the owner
freedom of access, circulation, activities	control of access, circulation, activities
acknowledging activities of staff	concealing activities of staff
about preservation	about consumption
flexible lifestyle patterns	fixed lifestyle patterns
design general for evolving family	design specific to particular family
creating community	isolated from community
often inviting	often pretentious
inclusive	exclusive
natural materials	fancy, highly finished materials
of the land	on the land